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GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
SAN JUAN

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SAN JUAN, P. R.

October 15, 1942

Circular Letter No. 80

To: Superintendents of Schools, Assistant  
Superintendents, Elementary School  
Principals and Teachers

RE: INTERPRETATION OF THE ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL REPORT

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The new school reports distributed recently are to be used in all grades except those 7th and 8th grades included in organized junior high schools. They differ radically in significance from those previously used. The traditional report had a five-point marking scale in which each letter was assigned a fixed objective value, and the sum total of these determined promotion or non-promotion. The present report consists of a three-point rating scale. No rigid value is attached to each of the grades to be given. This allows sufficient flexibility to cover a wide range of human abilities, efforts, traits, etc. Do not construe this as meaning that the Department requires or advises the elimination of non-promotion from the school system of the Island. It is felt, however, that pupils are human beings, not machines, and thoroughly known by their teachers, who should have the last word as to the advisability of promoting or failing them. Teachers are allowed an ample margin to decide what is best for each pupil. It will be readily noticed that the present discussion confirms the contents of Circular Letter No. 120, last year's series, on "Promotion Policies."

School failure has been defined as non-acceptable work in a grade or course which, as a result, must be repeated. The present trend is away from

the practice of failing pupils, in order to adjust them to the curriculum. Instead, the curriculum is now being adjusted to the pupil. This procedure involves a thorough individual analysis of the pupil in order to determine his needs. Thus, the recognition of individual differences is basic in any plan to reduce failures. In harmony with this plan, pupils will be marked "excellent," "satisfactory," or "deficient" for each quarter of the school year. Each mark should be independent of the other. There is no excuse for failing pupils who have been rated "satisfactory" or "excellent." The principal and the teacher should decide whether or not pupils marked "deficient" are to be promoted or failed. The deciding factor should be whether the pupil will profit more by repeating the grade or by being promoted.

Since, on the old school report cards, the letter "D" notwithstanding the fact that it stood for deficient work, was a passing grade, it would be advisable to explain to parents that, in the present report, although the letter "D" stands for "deficient," it may or may not constitute a passing mark.

Care should be taken to explain, in the narrative report for each quarter, the deficiencies of each pupil and the steps to be taken to remedy these deficiencies for the benefit of both the pupil and his parents.

The three-point system of marking - "excellent," "satisfactory," and "deficient" - covers the whole range of abilities. Naturally, the largest number in a group of pupils will fall within the classification, "satisfactory," and the remainder will be more or less evenly divided between the other two ratings. The interpretation to be given these terms is given below:

- 1- SATISFACTORY (S) Those pupils who meet the requirements, neither excelling to a noticeable degree nor falling behind to a marked extent, may be called "satisfactory." The standards, or norms of achievement, established in the schools of any one district should be liberal and reasonable enough so that they may be attained by the majority of the group.

- 2- EXCELLENT (E) Under this rating fall those pupils who excel or exceed, in kind or degree, the norms of achievement and the goals of attainment previously mentioned, and who surpass to a reasonable degree those pupils classed as "satisfactory."
- 3- DEFICIENT (D) Within this category fall pupils who for one reason or another, fall below the minimum norms of achievement and goals of attainment mentioned before; who are found wanting in regard to certain requirements; who do insufficient, inadequate, incomplete work either because their abilities are limited or because they do not care.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) José M. Gallardo  
Commissioner of Education